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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 OIC-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 DLOS-07 COA-02 DRC-01

/160 W
---------- 021693
R 171539Z JUL 74
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0900
INFO USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 17388

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--ADDITION OF LAST LINE)

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, FR
SUBJECT: UNGA SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION -- STEAMROLLER TACTICS

REF: A) PARIS 13362; B) STATE 123636

1. SUMMARY: QUAI THINKS FULLER COORDINATION OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' POSITIONS IS BEST WAY TO MEET LDC'S "STEAMROLLER TACTICS". SINCE CONSENSUS PROCEDURE HAS MERIT IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES, GOF CONSIDERS THAT CONSENSUS PROCEDURE AS SUCH SHOULD NOT BE OBJECT OF WESTERN CRITICISM. RATHER, WESTERN OPPOSITION SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON "BAD" RESOLUTIONS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE "STEAMROLLERED" THROUGH BY CONSENSUS OR BY VOTE. END SUMMARY.

2. ACTING QUAI UN DIRECTOR BEAUX CALLED EMBOFF JULY 16 TO DISCUSS AIDE MEMOIRE ON "STEAMROLLER TACTICS" WHICH WE HANDED LEPRETTE DURING MAY 30 CONVERSATION (REF A). BEAUX SAID OUR VIEWS HAD BEEN CONSIDERED BY A NUMBER
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OF OFFICES OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY LEGAL

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SECTION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND THAT HE WISHED SHARE
FURTHER FRENCH THINKING ON MATTER WITH US.

3. BEAUX NOTED THAT OUR MAY DEMARCHE HAD BEEN BASED
PRIMARILY ON SPECIAL SESSION WHICH MOST RECENT AND
CLEARLY MOST SERIOUS EXAMPLE OF STEAMROLLER TACTICS,
AS REFLECTED IN UNUSUALLY STRONG RESERVATIONS
EXPRESSED BY FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE TO SO-CALLED CONSEN-
SUS. FRENCH BELIEVE, ON OTHER HAND, CONTINUED BEAUX,
THAT ANOTHER RESULT AT SPECIAL SESSION MIGHT HAVE BEEN
ACHIEVED HAD THERE BEEN EARLIER CONSULTATION AMONG
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID US MIGHT
MADE BY US TO CONSULT WITH WEO'S AS DETAILED IN REF B.
BEAUX TOOK NOTE OF OUR REACTION TO LEPRETTE'S EARLIER
REMARKS AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE CLARIFICA-
TION.)

4. BEAUX WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN GENERAL FRENCH ARE
AGREED ON THE DANGERS OF THE AUTOMATIC LDC MAJORITY.
HOWEVER, FRENCH CONSIDER THAT "STEAMROLLER" TACTIC
CAN BE AND IS USED BY LDC'S AS EFFECTIVELY IN VOTING
SITUATION AS IN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE "CONSENSUS". HE
CITED AS EXAMPLES OF SUCH TACTICS THE VOTES ON
COUNTLESS DECOLONIZATION RESOLUTIONS WHICH ALTHOUGH ILL-
ADVISED AND UNENFORCEABLE ARE NONETHELESS PASSED WITH
OVERWHELMING MAJORITIES.

5. BEAUX NOTED THAT THE USE OF CONSENSUS HAS DEVELOPED
LARGELY SINCE 1960. HE SAID IT IS A USEFUL TOOL IN
TRYING TO ACHIEVE COMPROMISE TEXTS TOLERABLE FOR THE
MINORITY AND WHICH GIVE AN ACCEPTABLE MINIMUM TO
EVERYBODY. HE CITED THE ADOPTION OF RULES OF
EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL USE OF CONSENSUS; THE FAILURE
TO ACHIEVE BY CONSENSUS SIMILAR RULES FOR THE LOS
CONFERENCE AT CARACAS, ON THE OTHER HAND, SHOWED
HOW THE CONSENSUS PROCEDURE DID NOT NECESSARILY
WORK TO GUARD WESTERN INTERESTS EVEN IN SUCH SITUATIONS.

6. BEAUX SAID CONSENSUS PROCEDURE IS USEFUL IN TWO
INSTANCES: WHEN IT IS DESIREABLE TO SEEK THE LOWEST
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COMMON DENOMINATOR FOR A PARTICULAR PROBLEM, AND
WHEN FOR POLITICAL REASONS A VOTE IS UNDESIREABLE AND
CONSENSUS MORE PRUDENT, SUCH AS DURING CONSIDERATION
OF PLO ATTENDANCE AT THE CARACAS LOS CONFERENCE.

7. THUS THE FRENCH CONSIDER THAT THE PRACTICE OF CON-
SENSUS IS IN ITSELF NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD, HE SAID;
IT IS THE CONSENSUS ITSELF WHICH IS GOOD OR BAD.

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CONSEQUENTLY, FRENCH BELIEVE THAT THE PROBLEM IS TO FIND ARGUMENTS TO CONVINCE LDC'S THAT A PARTICULAR CONSENSUS WOULD BE HARMFUL TO THE UN, RATHER THAN TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THE PRACTICE OF CONSENSUS AS SUCH SHOULD BE ABANDONED.

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8. BASED ON THE ABOVE, BEAUX SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAD CONCLUDED THAT WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT A PARTICULAR CONSENSUS IS BAD, THE WEO'S MUST CONCERT AMONG THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO OPPOSE IT. THEY SHOULD CONSULT WITH EACH OTHER, COMBINE FORCES TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE LDC'S OF THE CONSENSUS' WEAKNESS AND, IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, OPPOSE THE CONSENSUS. NOTING THAT THE LDC'S APPEAR TO THINK THAT A CONSENSUS ENGAGES THE DC'S MORE THAN DOES A RESOLUTION CARRIED BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY WHICH THE DC'S VOTE AGAINST, BEAUX REMARKED THAT WESTERN OPPOSITION COULD BE NONETHELESS EXPRESSED EITHER BY STATING RESERVATIONS TO A CONSENSUS OR BY INSISTING ON A VOTE AND VOTING AGAINST A RESOLUTION. HE REPEATED THE FRENCH HOPE THAT THE US AND WEO'S WILL CONCERT

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THEIR ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT GA AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE
AT THE PROSPECTS OF FRANCO-US BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS
ON UN MATTERS IN EARLY SEPTEMBER.
WESTERN COORDINATION TO WHICH BEAUX SUBSCRIBES WILL
CHARACTERIZE FUTURE FRANCO-AMERICAN ACTION AT THE UN,
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WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF GREATER
FRENCH WILLINGNESS TO CONSULT WITH US.
IRWIN

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